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*If the very old
will remember
the very young will listen*

Indian and Eskimo Affairs Program

Education

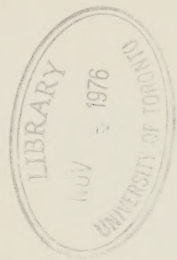
The Light of Yesterday

A pictorial history of life in Northeastern Manitoba
during the 1920's

Indian and
Northern Affairs
et du Nord



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The Light of Yesterday

A pictorial history of life in Northeastern Manitoba
during the 1920's.

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Manitoba Region.

Pictures by the Reverend R. T. Chapin
who worked and lived with the Native people
in Northern Manitoba 50 years ago.


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Preface

This pictorial history of life in the Northeast District of Manitoba was prepared for use in primary and elementary schools. While it is particularly relevant to young Indian students living in Northeastern Manitoba, non-Native students may also benefit from a close study of the pictures which depict traditional ways of a group of Woodland Indians during the 1920's. The fact that parents and grandparents can be identified in many of the pictures will serve to

strengthen family ties while promoting a better understanding of the day-by-day activities of long ago.

Hopefully, a small but important part of the culture of the Woodland Indian may thus be preserved.



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*Northeast District
Manitoba, Canada*



These maps will give you an idea of the location of the various small communities where the photographs in this book were taken.

Leaving Norway House 1923



Norway House, from the time of its founding as a Hudson's Bay trading post until the early 1960's, was one "outside" centre for the people of the Northeast District. It was the "Winnipeg" of past decades. It was the educational, commercial and medical centre for the District. In the 1920's, children from the various bands in this area went to residential school in Norway House. Goods were transported via the waterways to the posts in the District and the fur

harvest was shipped out the same way. The York boat brigades gathered there and the Hudson's Bay Company governors met there periodically.

This picture shows two canoes leaving Norway House for Island Lake. The picture was taken from a third canoe.

The canoes are low in the water.

Trace on a map the canoe route from Norway House to Island Lake, as well as the route from Norway House to Oxford House and to Gods Lake.

How many days travel by canoe would each trip take? How long does such a trip take by air today?



Portaging a Pack

From Norway House to Island Lake there are 33 portages over which canoes and supplies had to be carried. In this picture an Island Lake man is carrying a heavy load over a portage route.

Why is portaging sometimes necessary?

What is a tumpline?

As an experiment you might try to see if using a tumpline makes carrying a bulky load easier.

What instrument does the man carry in his belt?

The Native people of the Northeast District were outstanding canoeists, guides and “trippers”.

“Tripping” was hard work. The men got up early in the morning, cooked breakfast, broke camp, loaded canoes, paddled and portaged until late in the afternoon when it was time to end the day’s travel. Then they set up a new camp and cooked supper before going to bed.



Working Up Foot of Rapids

These are rapids on the McLaughlin River. The canoes are being eased to a landing on an island in the centre of the river. The man at the back of the boat (the stern man) is steering; the man amidships (the centre of the boat) is rowing.

Is it dangerous to stand up in a canoe? Why is the stern man in the nearest canoe standing?

Why do you think the canoes were propelled by oars rather than by canoe paddles?

Note the rapid water on the left and in the immediate foreground.

Do you think it would be possible to go up these rapids in a canoe with a good outboard motor?

Let us imagine that the canoe in the foreground struck a rock causing the canoe to turn over. Pretend that you are (a) one of the men in the water or (b) one of the men in the other canoe or (c) one of the men in the third canoe which has already landed: what action would you take?



Loaded Canoe

This is an interesting picture. After days of hard work and difficult portaging, the men in this canoe are obviously happy. They are trying to pass the canoe from which the picture was taken.

Can you guess the weight of the cargo being carried in this canoe?

How much will each man have to carry at the next portage?

How many trips will each man have to make?

Do not forget they will have to carry the canoe too.

*Loading Canoes
at End of Portage*



The canoes are nearly ready to “set sail”. Canoes had to be carefully loaded to ensure the proper distribution of weight. This is a skill in itself.

The canoeists have probably just reached a rather large body of water. It would appear that a sail has been raised to take advantage of the wind. In this case two canoes will be lashed together for greater stability and a mast stepped in each canoe.



Tracking Up Rapids

In this instance, it has not been necessary to completely unload the canoe and portage it over the white water in the background. Using a “painter” or rope, the canoe is pulled along the shore. The two men beside the canoe are holding the canoe so that it will not be damaged on the rocks. The third man is pulling the bow back toward the shore and around the bend above the rapids.

When might one “track” down a rapids?

How would this be done?

Which do you think would be easier; tracking up a rapids or down a rapids? How would you arrange ropes for tracking downstream?

Very skilled canoeists might elect to shoot a rapids rather than portage it. **What must one do before shooting a rapids? What are the hazards involved? Once in a rapids can the canoeist do very much but continue to the end?**



Two Canoes Sailing

On large bodies of water, such as Gods Lake, Oxford House and Island Lake, the wind was used to propel canoes and so provide rest for tired arms and backs. Here two men, James Wood and Norman Wood of

Island Lake, have erected sails and are making way. Both canoes appear to have heavy loads.

Can you tell how the sails have been erected?

In the picture, from which direction is the wind coming?

What might happen if there was a sudden gust of wind? Would the cargo help to give the canoe better balance?



Achigo Lake
(since changed to *Sachigo Lake*)

Three styles of travel in earlier days are depicted here: snowshoe, dog team and canoe (in the background).

At what time of the year was this picture taken?

Is this a dangerous time to travel? Why?

The man on the right is breaking trail. What does this suggest about snow conditions?

Did you know that one dog team and a sleigh were called a train?

The dogs were harnessed “in line ahead”, whereas the Eskimos tended to use a “fan” with the dogs

widely spread in front of the sleigh. Study the next picture entitled “Dogs Through Burn on Trail to Oxford House” and see if you can determine the reason for the “in line ahead” method of harnessing dogs as used by the people of the Northeast District of Manitoba.



*Dogs Through
Burn on Trail to Oxford House*

Was this picture taken very close to Oxford House?

If the train was very close to Oxford House what might one expect to see in the burn and on the trail?

How many dogs can you count? What breed of dog is shown here?

What is the dog in the front of the team called?

Which dog in the team is the most valuable to the owner?

Find out how many miles a dog team might travel on a good day. Like snowmobiles, dogs require fuel: what do they eat?

An elder or parent accustomed to travel by dog team long ago might tell you all about the feeding, care and training of dogs. He might also tell you how to make a good harness. One might be made and a dog harnessed to pull you or a classmate.



The "Old Post", Island Lake

This is Linklater Island post as it was in 1923. The large number of people along the shore suggest that the picture was taken around Treaty Day that year.

"The Bay" posts and the "Missions" were the focal points for winter and summer camp people.

It was at the trading posts that certain goods such as flour, lard, fish hooks, nets, clothing, blankets, traps, axes, guns and ammunition were exchanged for furs.

*Hudson's Bay Company Store
Dry Goods Section*



A view of the interior of the "Old Post", Island Lake, 1927 is shown here.

Note the construction of the building and particularly the ceiling beams. Goods were stored in the attic above as well as on the shelves.

Move around the room with your eyes and identify as many of the articles for sale as you can. How did the buyer pay for goods in those days? Can you identify the various kinds of furs brought in by the trappers?

What dry goods not shown here would be required by the hunter-fisherman of that day?

There would appear to be a small set of scales in the lower left-hand corner. What kinds of dry goods would be measured out for sale?

*Hudson's Bay Company Store
Trinkets, Toys
and Groceries Section*



Note the small bundle of furs above the window.

Are these muskrat?

Try to identify as many of the articles on the shelves as possible.

Can you guess the price of these articles?

Then? Now?

Are there more or fewer toys and trinkets in the local stores today?

*Hudson's Bay Company Store
Groceries and Hardware Section*



This picture shows “the Bay” grocery section with some “hardware” hanging from the ceiling.

The man in the picture is Mr. Collins, after whom Collins Bay, Island Lake, has been named. He is fondly remembered by the people as “the long tooth boss”.

Can you identify the goods on the shelf?

What goods would you have expected to find on the shelves in 1927? Your grandmother can help you answer this question.

*Island Lake
Old Mission and
Church from Lake*



The "Old Mission" was across the channel from the "Old Post" (Hudson's Bay Store on Linklater Island) until it was moved to Garden Hill in 1927-28. The large white building was the home of the minister. The church is to the left and a bell tower stands roughly half-way between the two buildings. There is a small cabin to the right. A fence surrounds the

buildings. Its purpose is not clear, although it probably provided some protection for the enclosed gardens.



*Oxford House Mission
and Church
from Lake, 1923*

The Oxford House Mission was located just east of the Hudson's Bay Post, that is, to the left of the picture.

Note the bell tower atop the church. Also note the cow and the horse. Reverend Atkinson was the resident missionary at Oxford House at this time.

*Open Air Church Service
Garden Hill 1926*



The "Old Post" can be seen across the channel.
The mission house is on the left, the church is off
to the right.

Reverend Chapin is delivering the service.
He stands to the right of the tower; the people are
seated on the ground.

Hymns were sung in the Cree-Saulteau language
of the people.

*Church
'Old Mission', Island Lake*



It's Sunday, church service is over and the people have gathered in the church yard to talk and laugh. Some of the people have paddled from Maria Portage and Waasagamach Bay to attend.

Note the rather large hat worn by the child in the foreground. *Is it his hat or do you think he has borrowed his father's hat?*

Since the missionaries could not speak the language of the people, how did they speak or preach to the people?

During the summer months the people were at their fish camps around the lakes. Sunday services had a very special meaning since they regularly brought the people together.



Hauling Building Logs

The stores, mission buildings and first houses were built of logs. Building logs were cut and peeled in the late spring (May and June). The logs were often allowed to soak in the water for a few weeks before drying. When dry, they were ready for building.

The logs pictured were for the new Mission House on Mission Island at Garden Hill, built in 1927-28.

Wass (right), Hamilton (centre) and Stevenson (left) islands can be seen in the background.

Why were the logs cut in spring?

What was the advantage of allowing the logs to soak for several weeks?

How were logs held in place in these early years?

There were very few log houses at this time in the Island Lake and Gods Lake areas although a 1924 map of Oxford House suggests there were at least 20 such buildings between the Hudson's Bay Posts at the narrows outlet and at Jackson Bay.

Can you suggest reasons for this difference?



*Garden Hill Church 1927-28
Chief and Group*

The man in the foreground smoking a pipe is James Loonfoot, Chief of the Island Lake Band during the late 1920's. He was an outstanding leader of the people in this area.

The decision to locate reserve lands at the present site of Garden Hill was primarily his. Reserve lands, at that time, were generally located close to the site of the Hudson's Bay Company Post. The Island

Lake Bay store was then located on Linklater Island a few miles from the mouth of the Island Lake River. Ice conditions there were very poor and the currents made travel difficult, even in the summer time.

Garden Hill is some 10 miles south of the "Old Post"

In 1938 the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned its land on Linklater Island and moved to Stevenson Island to be near the people at Garden Hill.

The Mission was moved in 1927 when the reserve lands were delineated. Here we see the men building the new church on Church Point. The logs have been squared and roofing boards cut at the sawpit.



*Mrs. E. Chapin and
Miss Dorinda Sturdy*

Mrs. Chapin (on the right) was the wife of the Reverend R. T. Chapin, one of the first missionaries at Island Lake. Miss Dorinda Sturdy was the first resident teacher in the Island Lake area. She came to Island Lake in 1923 and taught a large group of children in the church across from the "Old Post" during that first summer. At freeze-up time she moved to Waasagamach where she had a classroom (provided by Mr. Wass, a free trader there) and about eight regular pupils. These students were the

children of trappers who were able to stay at Waasagamach because their trap lines were close by.

With no chalkboards, very few books and virtually no pencils or paper, how do you suppose Miss Sturdy taught school? Perhaps your grandfather or your grandmother can tell you what school was like in your community long ago.



*Mission School
Island Lake, 1925*

Charles Clay came to Island Lake as a teacher in 1925. The picture shows Mr. Clay with a summer school class of approximately 40 pupils. School was held in the church which is used as the background for this picture.

Note that the walls here are made of boards cut at a sawpit, not logs.

*Mr. Clay's
Winter Class*



This picture shows Mr. Clay and the winter class of 1925-26. Attendance had dropped. **Where have all the children gone?**

The winter school session was held in a renovated log cabin close to the "Old Mission".

Have elders from Island Lake help you identify the students in the pictures.



Oxford House School

Other communities had well established schools in 1923. Norway House, as noted earlier, had a large residential school and many pupils.

This picture shows the mission school at Oxford House.

Look at the clothing worn by the children and the teacher (right background), and then guess the time of the year the picture was taken.

Was it just before or just after freeze-up or just before or after break-up?

Why are the children at school? Why are they not with their parents at winter camps? Was there perhaps a difference between Island Lake and Oxford House regarding what people did and where they lived?

Perhaps some of the Oxford House elders can identify the children by name. They may even find themselves in the picture.

*Boarding School Picnic
1923 or 1927
Norway House*



Six residential school children from the Northeast District are shown here with the Reverend and Mrs. R. T. Chapin and Dorinda Sturdy.

What would residential school life have been like without parents or relatives close by?

What was a day in the life of a residential student like? Did boys and girls do the same kinds of things?

What subjects were taught? Were there lots of games to play?

List the advantages and disadvantages of residential school life by pretending to be a student at Norway House in the 1920's.

*Summer Fish Camp
Maria Portage 1923*



During the 20's and until the late 1940's, the people spent their summers in camps similar to the one shown here. In October, before freeze-up, the family group left for its winter camp in the bush, returning to its summer campsite following break-up in May.

Fish became the main food of the summer camp; meat, a by-product of trapping and hunting, was the principal fare of the winter camp.

The distance between a summer and a winter camp was seldom less than 20 miles and, in a few instances, it exceeded 130 miles.

Study a large map of the St. Theresa Point Reserve. Why is it assumed that the camp shown is on the east side of the peninsula?

Is there a smokehouse for drying and preserving fish? What is the rack in the foreground used for? How many families, would you judge, make up this camp?

Note that the wall tents surround the tepee and may, in fact, be directly connected to the tepee via a passageway. If this is so, what must the tepee be used for mainly? Where would the cooking fire or fires be located?



Adam Harper's House and Tepee

This picture illustrates the tepee – wall tent connection. Note that the house in the background is constructed of squared timbers at least to ceiling level.

There were very few such houses at Gods Lake or Island Lake prior to 1945.



Maria Portage 1923

Here we see the few permanent homes in the Island Lake area at the time.

Can you identify their location? Are these houses still standing?



Norman Wood's Camp

An interesting picture of a typical winter camp. A sled in the foreground suggests the departure or arrival of a hunter. There is a food cache on the large tree to the right of the picture.

One of Norman Wood's boys (extreme left) is standing behind the sled.

It's a bright warm day.

What do you suppose the children in the picture will do? Will they help draw water, cut wood, tend fish holes or play?



Bear Lake Shack

This is another interesting winter camp. There is an outer traditional type tepee “vestibule” and a main cabin with windows and with a barrel-type stove and stove pipe (note smoke from behind tree) in the main cabin.

A long sled leans against the cabin.

There is a variety of fur about, possibly four rabbit blankets. *Can you find some of these? What are the other skins or pelts?*



*The Knott Winter Camp
on Beaver Hill Lake*

Find Beaver Hill Lake on a large map of Manitoba.

Note the food cache and storage platform at the right. **Why is it so high?**

A dog team with the missionary has just arrived.
Where will the minister, his guides and helpers sleep?
There will be at least 15 for supper tonight. **What**
will Mrs. Knott serve for supper?



Moses McDougall's Log Tepee 1927

This is a scene of Moses McDougall's winter camp. The structure is typical of an earlier period, since most camps at this time were of the log cabin design.

This home was constructed simply by erecting three or four main posts and lashing the tops together.

The balance of logs on the outer wall are supported by the main posts. The logs were then chinked and packed with moss and mud. Extra insulation is provided by the winter harvest of hides and furs as well as old cloth materials. The diameter of the floor is probably between five and six metres.

Four happy looking children stand in the entrance. The tepee appears to have a typical tepee door, that is, a drop cloth or hide door.

Would such a home be as comfortable as the log cabin-type home?



Angling Lake

This is Adam Keno's winter camp at Angling Lake, taken in 1927. The log camp appears to be recessed in the ground, taking advantage of the warmth conserved in the ground. There is a tepee-type vent in the roof for ventilation and a chimney at the back. The roof holds a rather large number of furs – the winter harvest – and most probably food, open or in sacks but out of the reach of dogs and other

animals. There is what appears to be a drying rack on the right. The burn in the background has no doubt provided excellent fleshing posts as well as firewood.



Adam Keno's Lodge

Moving inside Adam Keno's lodge, we see the men of the camp seated around a box-type stove and chimney. Food has been laid out for supper. The walls are chinked with moss. The objects on the wall are not easily identifiable, except for the blanket and newspaper.



Below Zero Weather

Here the men of Jonah Little's camp have gathered around the lodge fireplace.

Note the large stone used at the top of the fireplace.

A stew or tea is heating up in front of the fire.

What is the Indian name for the stick that holds the pot?

Can you identify the articles hanging from the ceiling?

Tepee Interior



The man smoking a pipe is Henry Fiddler, a fine Chief and leader of the people for many years.

Why does the man next to him have his head down?

Again there is a pot on the open fire in the centre of the tepee. Perhaps they are brewing a pot of labrador tea. Do you know how this was done?

If this is a tepee, as identified by the Reverend R. T. Chapin who took the picture, then it would appear that there is a double wall of logs – one inside to provide greater insulation from the cold. Earlier tepees of the Swampy and Woodland Cree people sometimes had a second interior wall made of hides.



Two elders swap yarns and laugh as a skinned rabbit is roasted before the open fire. The front legs are stretched above the animal's head and look very much like its ears.

Albert Monias' Camp – Inside



This picture shows the interior of Albert Monias' winter camp.

The picture is unique in that it was partially dependent on light from the roof vent.

An excellent view of the fireplace is presented here. The rocks have been bonded together with mud. Straw or moose hair was used to reduce cracking

and to strengthen the bonding material. The roof of the fireplace is quite high.

Someone in the class might make a model of this particular fireplace using small stones and clay or plasticine.

Note that the interior walls have been trimmed.

Survey the variety of articles in the room. Identify as many as you can. Which are the products of the hunt or the environment? Which came from the Bay store?



Henry Fiddler Family 1927

This is a very happy picture. It shows Henry, his wife Nancy and their three children sitting before a hearty looking supper neatly laid out on a cloth.

Note that the interior logs have been trimmed, probably with a broad axe. Newspaper has been used to provide extra insulation.

Can you identify the medicinal herbs hanging on the wall?

What covers the ground or floor?

What is the food that has been laid out for eating?

Do they have forks, knives and spoons to help them eat?

Do you think Mr. and Mrs. Fiddler have candies and sweets for their children?



A New Year's Eve Feast

A group has gathered at John Monias' house located at Maria Portage. They are very happy. A candle burns on the table and on the wall.

It will be noted that a composition paper lining insulates the interior walls.

The home is well equipped with tables and chairs.



Job McKay "Asleep"

This picture was taken inside a tepee-style lodge at Ponask Lake.

The long day has ended. The people of the lodge stretch out to sleep. Job lies to the extreme left.

Is he asleep?



*An Extended Family Group
at Winter Camp*

James Loonfoot, Chief, is third from the left.
Josie Monias stands to the left of the Chief; Thomas
Mamakeesik is the man with the pipe to the right

of the picture, his wife is on his left. The child carried
by Mrs. Mamakeesik is, at the present time,
Councillor Munroe of the Garden Hill Band.
The small man in traditional hunting regalia cannot
be identified.

Clothing here is of considerable interest. The
lady standing on the extreme left appears to be
wearing a commercially-made fur coat, one no doubt
fashioned by some distant furrier using pelts which
could have been furnished by the hunters in the
picture.



Red Sucker Lake Group

Edward Loonfoot is sitting in front of the group, holding his snowshoes. Note the man standing behind him and to the right. **What is the animal skin on his back? Has he made a hood of the skin?**

The Red Sucker Lake people came to Island Lake after the Treaty in 1910. They later left and went back to Red Sucker Lake. Perhaps your grandparents can tell you why.



Peter Loonfoot and Friend

Study this picture carefully.

What can you identify on the roof?

What kind of blanket hangs above Peter's head?

Is there a good supply of firewood about?

What are the looped boughs hanging on the
wall used for?

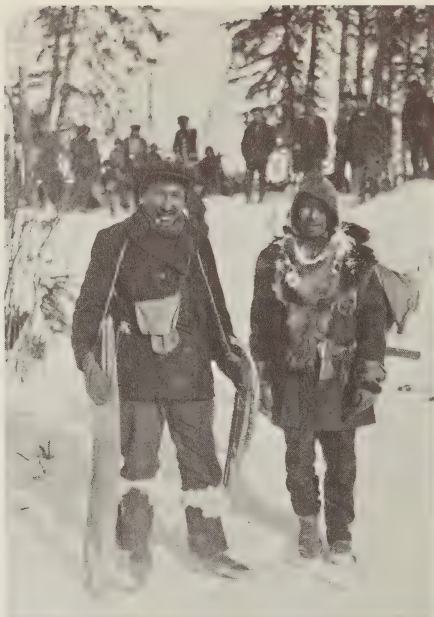
Is Peter a happy child? Why?

Mothers and Babies
Maria Portage 1923



Can you guess the ages of the children in the tikanogans? Mothers did not have disposable diapers in those days. What might they have used to keep baby dry? Notice the three young girls in the picture, each carries a toy tikanogan.

What are the advantages of a tikanogan over a baby carriage?



The Start of a Hunting Trip

The man on the left is Edward Loonfoot, who died shortly after Treaty Day in 1927. The man next to him is either Thomas Harper or Thomas Nataway.

Which of the two men is about to start out on a hunting and a trapping mission? How can you tell?

What is Edward Loonfoot holding in his left hand?

What was the trapper's coat with hood called?

What material is the coat and hood made of?

What does the trapper carry in his headgear?

Why?

The axe carried is inserted in the belt. There was a good reason for this. Do you know why? Perhaps your father or grandfather will be able to tell you.

What is the animal skin around the trapper's neck? What was it used for?

Note the foot and hand wear of the trapper. What are these articles made of?

What is the white material worn by Edward Loonfoot just below his knees? Why is it there?



Henry Fiddler and Son

Henry Fiddler was Chief of the Island Lake Band for many years. Here he is shown in 1923 with his young son Abel.

In the background it will be noted that the winter camp cabin is chinked with moss. Mud does not appear to have been used to seal the moss. The roof is most probably made of logs covered with moss and turf and further insulated with evergreen boughs which can be clearly seen.

Of particular interest is the dress of the child. He is wearing an attractive and obviously warm rabbit skin parka with hood. His mitts and mukluks

appear to be of moose hide and his mitts are "stringed" with a broad strip of cloth or hide. Under his right arm he is carrying his Christmas present, a set of snowshoes.

Mr. Fiddler's mukluks are in the Cree style of earlier days – pointed, but without beadwork.

*Mrs. Charles Harper
and Child
Ponask Lake*



Mrs. Harper is obviously very happy and very proud of her child.

An excellent view of the front end of a dog sled is provided here. A dog stands partly hidden just behind Mrs. Harper.

Do you notice any difference between the walls of the cabin and the logs which protrude at the end of the cabin?

How do you account for this difference?

Study the pictures entitled "Getting Ready for Winter" on page 58. What was the "strawed mud" used for? Since there would be no straw at a winter camp, what substitute might be found in the natural surroundings?

While mud and moss provided good insulation against the cold, there were disadvantages in the use of these materials. What would happen in the fall if there was a heavy rain storm? Does mud tend to crack when it is dried out? Might the moss harbour little bugs that would get into food, bedding and clothing?

The Sawpit



Fishing, trapping and hunting were primary occupations. There were, of course, numerous other activities in the struggle for survival. Some of the latter are shown here and on the pages that follow along with incidental and miscellaneous shots which tell something about a way of life about to change.

Logs were sawed into boards on this structure. The log was lifted and placed on top of the frame, then with one man up on the frame and the other

below, each holding one end of a very long saw, the cutting began. A gauge or a guide was used to ensure an even thickness of the cut boards.

Plane 1924



This was the first – or one of the first – aircraft to visit the Northeast District of Manitoba. Here it is seen taxiing off Linklater Island, Island Lake.

Why was it that the first aircraft to visit the area were float or pontoon planes?

When were the airstrips first constructed in the area?

Are float and pontoon planes still used today?

For what reason, if there are landing fields?

How many passengers do you think a plane such as the one shown could carry?

Can you find the name of this plane? What are the call letters written on the side and under the wings?

Do you see an enclosed cabin?

Which would you have preferred: travel in one of these planes, travel in a canoe or travel by dog team?

The Sullivans
Oxford House 1923



Identification of this picture is still uncertain. The building is constructed of squared timber and sealed with plaster. The roof is shingled (something not seen in other district communities). This two-storey house is believed to have been located on Hudson's Bay Company land close to the Narrows. Mr. Sullivan was in all probability the Bay manager.

Students might like to check the above observation with an Oxford House elder. If residing at

Oxford House, you might like to examine the square timbered buildings on "the Bay" land to see if this old building still stands.

Fairy Rock



This rock is found in Fairy Rock Lake just east of Island Lake and about 60 miles directly south of Oxford House. Try to find the lake on a large map.

Many stories are told about this rock and the strange beings who inhabit it. Perhaps you would like to tell others in your class about the stories you have been told.

Why do the rock people avoid being seen by others?
Can you see the cleavage and the caves where
the Fairy Rock people conceal themselves from view?

Horse and Cariole Oxford House



Oxford House had a unique method of travel which was not enjoyed, at that time, in other district communities. It was perhaps faster than dog team travel but there were problems.

Could the horse move through the bush as easily as a dog team?

Would a man on snowshoes be able to break an effective trail for a horse? Why?

What does a horse eat for fuel and energy?

You will find in the History of the Northeast District that the first Hudson's Bay Company factor, Mr. Sinclair, had animals (cows and horses) brought to Oxford House in the early 1800's. There were then

a few good fields for pasturing and feed, so feeding of cattle was possible. The Roman Catholic Mission at Island Lake was, at a later date, to have a variety of domesticated animals including horses.

Over good trails the horse could haul much greater loads of wood than could a dog team or a snowmobile.



Getting Ready For Winter

Three young men are seen here mixing mud with their feet. This can be lots of fun when it's not part of one's work day. In the lower picture the men have been joined by two others who are helping at this point to add the straw. The mud and straw will then be loaded into boxes and carried to the buildings which require repair work. It will be used to plaster cracks in the walls, improving the insulation.



Rafting Wood

People who had permanent log dwellings were obliged to get sufficient firewood to keep their houses warm during the winter months. In the 1920's the best way to do this was to cut the wood in thick bush country and then raft it home. The picture shows an Island Lake raft. The Oxford Lake raft was strengthened by having layers of logs lying at right angles to each other. Water conditions on Oxford Lake were often more dangerous and difficult than conditions on Island Lake.

The amount of wood carried on a single raft might vary between eight and 15 cords. Rafts were

often chained together in a train as shown in the picture below. In this case, there are six rafts sailing home with a good supply of firewood for the coming winter.

The "Old Mission", Island Lake, can be seen through the sails of the raft in the top picture.



Dr. Wright

Dr. Wright, with the help of many Native people, surveyed the Island Lake area in the early 1920's. His map was used in delineating the reserves at St. Theresa Point (then Maria Portage), Waasagamach and Garden Hill. Dr. Wright is on the left in this picture. His helper, Roy, is on the right.

Keep a few embers
From the fire
That used to burn in your village,
Some day go back
So all can gather again
And relight a new flame,
For a new life in a changed world.